United Nations S/2012/511

Security Council

Distr.: General
3 July 2012

Original: English and Spanish

## Note verbale dated 2 July 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to forward the concept paper for the Security Council open debate on the theme "Post-conflict peacebuilding: report of the Peacebuilding Commission" to be held on 12 July 2012, on the occasion of the submission of the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its fifth session (A/66/675-S/2012/70) (see annex). This debate will be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Her Excellency María Angela Holguín.

Since its creation, as a mechanism to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict, the Peacebuilding Commission has been committed to the achievement of durable peace and development. Based on the principle of national ownership, the Commission promises to be an important player in the integration of peacebuilding, development and reconstruction strategies to reduce the risk of a relapse into conflict.

The event will offer an opportunity to assess progress and challenges and identify the potentials on undertaking the Commission's three core functions: political accompaniment, advocacy and support; resources mobilization and fostering coherence. The debate will also continue the ongoing dialogue on what needs to be done to strengthen effectiveness and impact in the field and to take full advantage of the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in achieving sustainable peace.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

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## Annex to the note verbale dated 2 July 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

## Post-conflict peacebuilding: report of the Peacebuilding Commission

### Concept paper

1. On 12 July 2012 Colombia proposes to convene an open debate of the Security Council to consider the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its fifth session.[1] The debate is convened pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1645 (2005) and 1646 (2005).

2. The report of the Peacebuilding Commission contains a detailed account of the activities undertaken by the Commission over the course of its fifth session. These activities can be described as a combination of policy and thematic discussions on peacebuilding-related issues and Commission mandates, as well as activities related to country-specific engagement in the six countries that are on the Commission's agenda. The report also contains a section pursuant to Council resolution 1947 (2010) related to the implementation of relevant recommendations of the report of the Co-Facilitators on the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture[2] (2010 Review).

### Context

3. Established as an intergovernmental advisory body based at United Nations Headquarters, the Peacebuilding Commission was originally mandated[3] to: (a) bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources; (b) advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery; (c) focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict; (d) support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development; (e) provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations; (f) develop best practices; (g) help ensure predictable financing; and (h) extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery.

4. Over the past six years since its inception, the Peacebuilding Commission has gained experience from engaging countries on its agenda that are at different stages of their peacebuilding process, facing different challenges and emphasizing different priorities. That experience has further focused the Commission's activities around three main functions, namely: (a) political accompaniment, advocacy and support; (b) resource mobilization; and (c) fostering coherence.

5. The need to organize the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in the countries on its agenda around these three functions was reinforced by the outcome of the 2010 Review. The Review further recommended that, in undertaking those functions, the Commission should demonstrate progress in three main areas, namely: (a) its impact in the field; (b) its performance at Headquarters; and (c) its

[1] A/66/675-S/2012/70.

[2] A/64/868-S/2010/393.

[3] Paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 60/180, and of Security Council resolution 1645 (2005).

relations with key actors, including principal organs, United Nations operational entities and international financial institutions.

**Value added and limitations of the Peacebuilding Commission**

6. Drawing upon the practical experience of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific work and the analysis presented in the 2010 Review, there is need for a better understanding of the nature and scope of the Commission's role. Fulfilling such a role involves appreciation of its potential added value, as well as acknowledgement of its limitations.

7. With respect to the value added, there is increasing recognition that the Peacebuilding Commission represents a potentially viable political platform for: (a) inclusive and nationally owned prioritization; (b) alignment of operational actors in support of identified national peacebuilding priorities; (c) advocacy for and mobilization of international support (financial, technical and political) for peacebuilding priorities; and (d) sustained and focused attention on peacebuilding priorities to mitigate risk factors.

8. It is also clear by now that the limitations of the Peacebuilding Commission stem from its very nature as a non-operational and advisory body based in New York, which include: (a) working through operational actors in the field who are deriving their respective mandates from different legislative sources; (b) non-existence of quantifiable peacebuilding outcomes; and (c) difficulty to assess the credibility of peacebuilding processes within a limited time frame.

9. Therefore, the future success of the Peacebuilding Commission will critically depend on its ability to leverage the unique composition of its membership, offer an international political framework within which national actors could lead a peacebuilding process, bring coherence and elicit sustained support from operational actors and partners. To this end, the Commission needs to continue to develop its substantive focus, instruments and organizational structures in order to bridge the divide between its potential valued added, on one hand, and its limitations, on the other hand.

**Purpose of the Security Council debate**

10. To date and pursuant to paragraph 12 of the Peacebuilding Commission's founding resolutions,[4] the Council referred to the Commission five of the six countries that are currently on its agenda, namely, Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. These countries are at various stages of their peacebuilding processes and the Council is invested in ensuring that the Commission's engagement in them yield tangible benefit for its populations. Therefore, this debate offers an opportunity for the Council to:

- Take stock of progress made by and challenges facing the Peacebuilding Commission in undertaking its three main functions (political accompaniment, advocacy and support; resource mobilization; and fostering coherence) drawing on country experiences.
- Draw on the views of key non-United Nations peacebuilding operational agencies (World Bank, African Development Bank) on the specific areas

[4] General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005).

requiring a strong partnership with the Peacebuilding Commission in the countries on its agenda.

- Share concrete proposals aimed at helping the ongoing efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission to enhance its impact in the field; strengthen its performance at Headquarters; and improve its relations with key actors including principal organs, United Nations operational entities and international financial institutions.

11. In this regard, Member States and invited participants are invited to structure their remarks with a view to responding to the following questions:

- How can the Peacebuilding Commission realize its potential added value in a crowded and somewhat fragmented field of operational actors in the countries on its agenda?
- Which political and structural tools should the Commission possess in order to undertake its three main functions in a way which would make tangible impact in the field?
- What can Member States specifically and collectively offer to empower the Commission to emerge as a viable instrument for a more coherent and effective United Nations peacebuilding agenda?

12. There is no outcome expected at the end of the debate. However, the joint membership of the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission is invited to take forward the discussion drawing on specific ideas and proposals made during the debate.